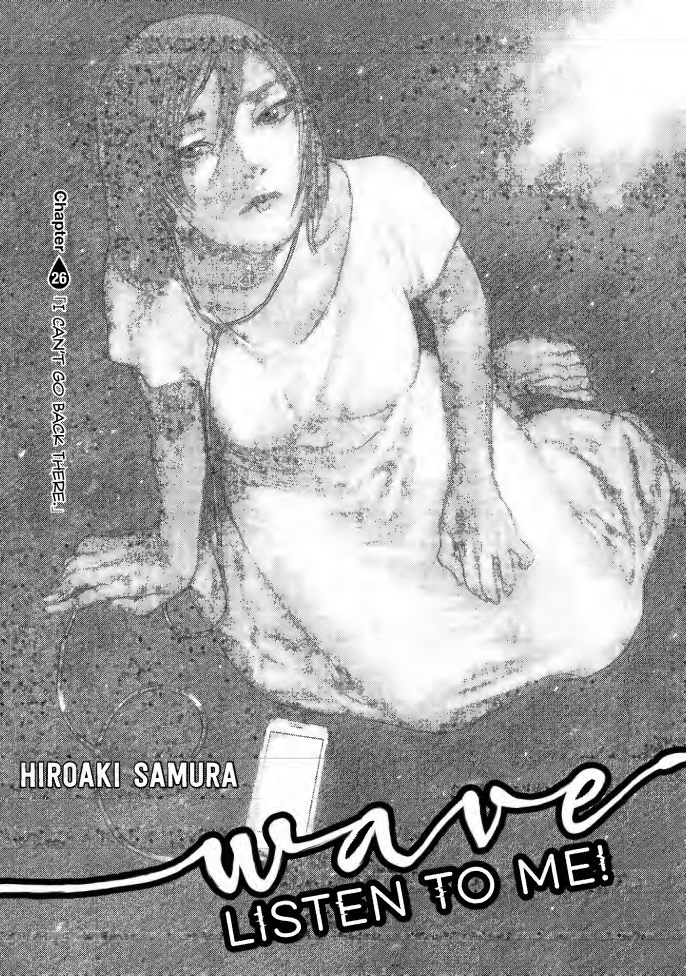
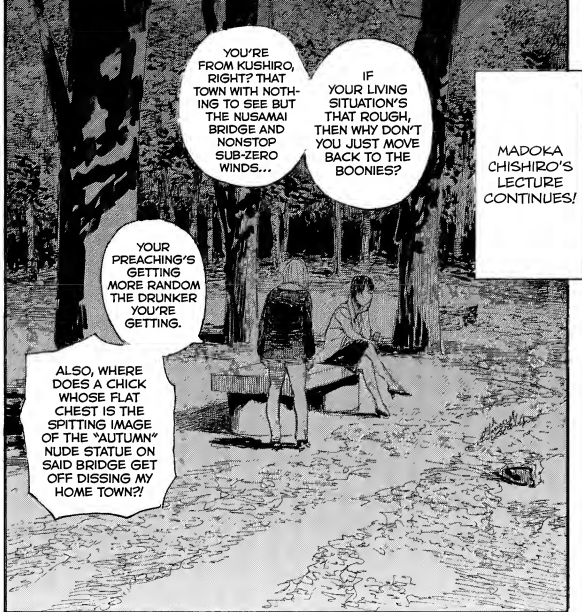




Chapter 29 I CAN'T GO BACK THERE!

HIROAKI SAMURA

wave
LISTEN TO ME!



YOU'RE FROM KUSHIRO, RIGHT? THAT TOWN WITH NOTHING TO SEE BUT THE NUSAMAI BRIDGE AND NONSTOP SUB-ZERO WINDS...

IF YOUR LIVING SITUATION'S THAT ROUGH, THEN WHY DON'T YOU JUST MOVE BACK TO THE BOONIES?

MADOKA CHISHIRO'S LECTURE CONTINUES!

YOUR PREACHING'S GETTING MORE RANDOM THE DRUNKER YOU'RE GETTING.

ALSO, WHERE DOES A CHICK WHOSE FLAT CHEST IS THE SPITTING IMAGE OF THE "AUTUMN" NUDE STATUE ON SAID BRIDGE GET OFF DISSING MY HOME TOWN?!



WHAT THE HELL KINDA TANGENT IS THAT?!

I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN SAPPORO,

BUT THERE WAS THIS GUY I WAS DATING WHEN I WENT TO HOKKAIDO U.

THE
STORY
SO
FAR

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF MATO, AN FM STATION WORKER, MINARE KODA HAS MADE HER DEBUT AS A RADIO DJ. WITH HER THIRD SHOW UNDER HER BELT AND RATINGS HIGH, ONE NIGHT, SHE'S CALLED OUT BY HER SENIOR DJ, CHISHIRO, WHOSE ONSLAUGHT OF CRITICISM LEAVES MINARE BAFFLED. MEANWHILE, OVER AT VOYAGER, TROUBLE STIRS WHEN MAKIE'S OLDER BROTHER SHOWS UP...

BROWN
BEAR
RE-
SEARCH
GROUP?!

HE WAS
ONE YEAR MY
SENIOR IN THE
BROWN BEAR
RESEARCH
GROUP WE
BELONGED
TO.

HE
WAS SUPER
SERIOUS AND
NEVER JOKED
AROUND, BUT
I LIKED THAT
ABOUT HIM.

WHO'D
HE LOOK
LIKE?

FOR
REAL?!
AWE-
SOME!

HM?
KAKU-
RYU*.

*KAKURYU RIKISABURO, A MONGOLIAN SUMO WRESTLER.



I KNOW
YOU'RE DRUNK
AND ALL, BUT
YOU'RE WITH
THE MEDIA!
TRY TO BE A
LITTLE MORE
POLITICALLY
CORRECT!

LADY,
PLEASE!



I forgot my
camera. Text
me the photos
later!

HOWEVER,
THERE ALSO
HAPPENED
TO BE A GIRL
JUST LIKE
YOU IN THAT
CLUB!

WHERE THE
ONLY THING
TO EAT IT IS
SPAGHETTI
KATSU*.

WELL, I
GUESS
IT MAKES
SENSE. SHE
WAS IN THE
EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT
AND ALSO
FROM
KUSHIRO.

A GIRL
WITH NO
PROSPECTS
FOR THE
FUTURE,
ONLY LIVING
IN THE
MOMENT!

*A LOCAL DISH OF KUSHIRO CONSISTING OF A FRIED CUTLET SERVED OVER SPAGHETTI.

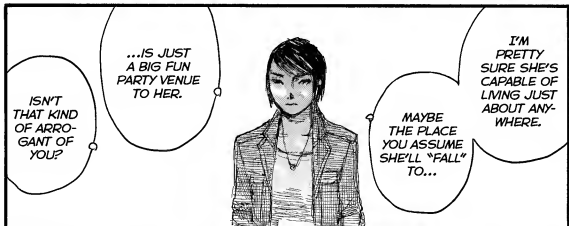
MUCH I
CAN'T LET
SLIDE,
THERE IS.

YOU'RE BOTH
DIRECTLY AND
INDIRECTLY
TALKING SHIT
ABOUT ME,
HUH?

A REAL
PIECE OF
HUMAN
GARBAGE
WHO TOOK
ADVANTAGE
OF THAT TO
GET AHEAD.

...AND
WAS A HIT
WITH ALL
THE GUYS.

SHE WAS
BLESSED
WITH THE
SAME VUL-
GAR WIT
THAT YOU
HAVE...





Uhh.
Next up,
we have one
from Miyoshi
Combo-san,
a 19-year-old
college
student.



SO,
I SENT
IN A WALL OF
TEXT TO THE
RADIO BITCH-
ING ABOUT
IT.

OH,
THEY
READ
IT...



YET, I
COULDN'T
SAY ANY
OF THAT
TO HIS
FACE...

...AND
I WAS
TOO
PROUD
TO TALK
TO MY
FRIENDS
ABOUT
IT.



...means
that you're
both roughly
around the
same aca-
demic level,
even though
you might be
in different
departments.

Also,
you make
it sound
like she's
just mind-
lessly goofing
around...

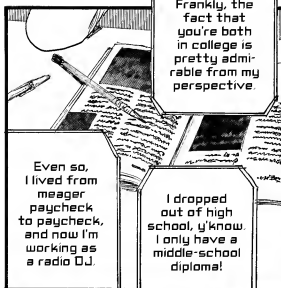
...but
I'm not
so sure
about
that.



Hmm...
Well, it
might be
hard to
understand
at 19,

You seem to be
looking down
on her, but
when you think
about it, the
fact that you
both go to the
same college...

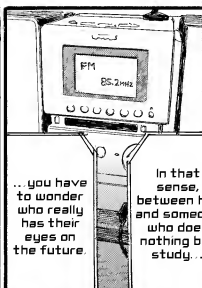
but
that's only
natural, to
be honest.



Frankly, the fact that you're both in college is pretty admirable from my perspective.

Even so, I lived from meager paycheck to paycheck, and now I'm working as a radio DJ.

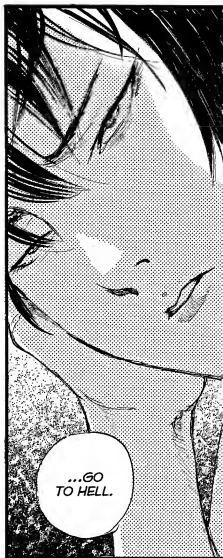
I dropped out of high school, y'know. I only have a middle-school diploma!



She could be trying to make as many connections as possible.

...you have to wonder who really has their eyes on the future.

In that sense, between her and someone who does nothing but study...



...GO TO HELL.



Thinking back on it, I only really have memories of partying with my friends.

I can't count how many people I know who'd help me out when I'm in a bind. Partying means building and expanding those sorts of relationships.



TO ALL THE
PAINFULLY
EARNEST
PEOPLE WHO
HAVE NOTHING
AMUSING TO
SAY...

BUT
LISTENING TO
THAT BROADCAST
IS WHAT MADE
ME DECIDE TO
BECOME A RADIO
PERSONALITY.

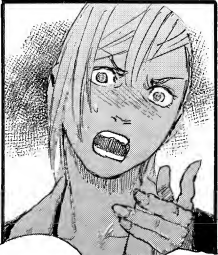
WELL,
CAN'T EXPECT
A HIGH-SCHOOL
DROPOUT DJ
TO HAVE ANY-
THING OF VALUE
TO SAY...



I WANT TO
KEEP TELLING
THEM, "IT'S
NOT YOUR
FAULT."

...I WANT TO
TELL THEM,
"YOU'RE NOT
ALONE."

TO ALL THE
UPRIGHT, AWK-
WARD FOLKS
WHO ALWAYS
HAVE THE SPOT-
LIGHT STOLEN
FROM THEM BY
MORE FLEXIBLE
PEOPLE...



WHOA,
THERE,
SEMPAI.

*didn't
think
you'd
make me
the face
of flexible
women.*

I ENTERED
THIS INDUSTRY
TO GET
REVENGE
ON PEOPLE
LIKE YOU!

THAT'S
RIGHT!

MOST
PEOPLE END
UP PAYING THE
PRICE SOME-
DAY FOR THAT
DEVIL-MAY-CARE
ATTITUDE.

THAT JUST
MEANS THAT
PARTICULAR
DJ HAD
RIDICULOUS
LUCK!



HEY!
ARE YOU
LISTENING,
CHISHIRO-
SAN?!

I
MEAN,
JUST
LOOK AT
ME!

NO WAY...
WHERE DO
I CHANNEL
THIS FURY
NOW...?

HUH...?
WAIT A
MINUTE,
HAVEN'T
I BEEN
PRETTY...

...AND I
DID HAVE AN
ADORABLE AD
LET ME MOVE IN
WITH HER WHEN
I HAD TO VACATE
MY APARTMENT.

...WELL,
I DID GET
SWOOPED UP
BY MATO-SAN
WHEN I WAS ON
THE VERGE OF
GETTING FIRED,
BUT STILL!



NO,
THAT'S
ALL
RIGHT.

WOULD
YOU LIKE
A RE-
CEIPT?



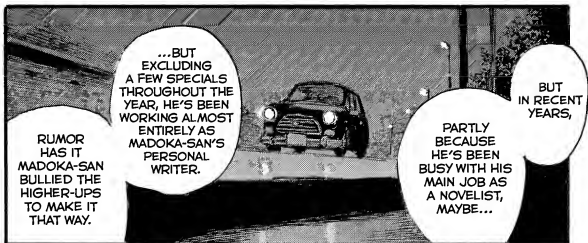
ADOR-
ABLE
AD?!

HUH?

...OH!

MINARE-
SAN!







...THAT
TALENT HAS
TO DRY UP
EVENTUALLY.

THAT, OR
THEY CAN'T
KEEP UP
WITH THE
TIMES.

...NO
MATTER HOW
TALENTED A
WRITER IS...

...BUT AS
MUCH AS
WE'D LIKE
TO HAVE A
DIRECTOR,
AD, MIXER,
AND WRITER
FOR EVERY
SHOW...

...THOSE
DAYS ARE
GONE.

AS AN
AD, YOU
SHOULD
ALREADY
KNOW
THIS...

NANBA-
SAN.



WHEN
ASKED WHETHER
OR NOT I REALLY
NEED A SCRIPT-
WRITER FOR MY
SHOW NOW, TO
BE HONEST, I'D
PROBABLY BE
FINE WITHOUT
ONE.



BUT
NOW...

AND I'VE
HAD GUESTS
CANCEL AT THE
LAST MINUTE
DUE TO UNFORE-
SEEN TROUBLE
AND HAD TO FILL
90 MINUTES WITH
AN IMPROMPTU
SEGMENT
BEFORE.

...I CAN
PREPARE
A WHOLE
SCRIPT BY
MYSELF IF
I'M IN THE
RIGHT
MOOD.



WHEN I
WAS JUST
STARTING
OUT AS A
RADIO PER-
SONALITY...

...I WOULD
GET TOO
NERVOUS TO
SPEAK IF I
DIDN'T HAVE
A SCRIPT BY
KUREKO-
SAN.



IT'S NOT
HIS MAIN
JOB OR MY
EGO THAT'S
TAKING WORK
AWAY FROM
KUREKO-SAN.

BEFORE
LONG, RADIO
STATIONS
WON'T HAVE
"WRITERS"
ANYMORE.

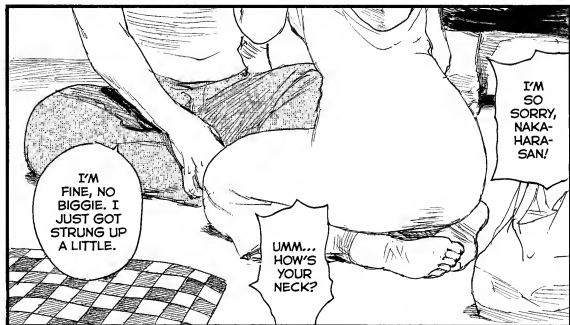
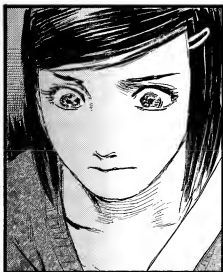
IT'S THE
STATION'S
DECISION.

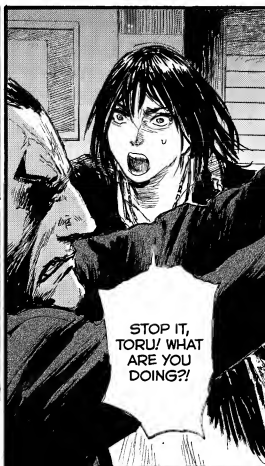
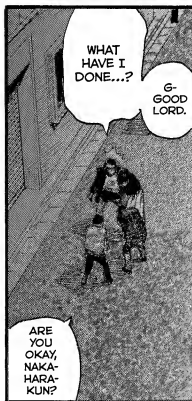


EVEN
SO...

...I KEEP
TELLING THE
PRODUCER THAT
I ABSOLUTELY
NEED KUREKO-
SAN.

IF I
DON'T, THEN
HE WON'T
HAVE A PLACE
AT MRS*
ANYMORE.







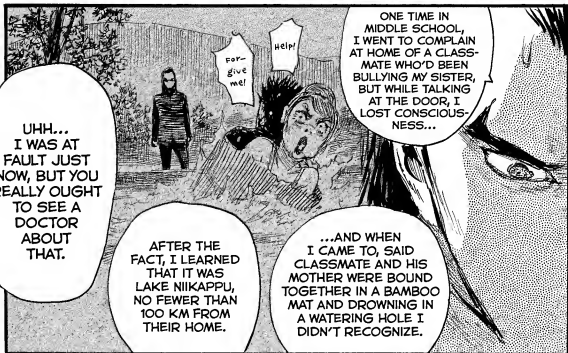
...I
TEND TO
BLACK OUT
TEMPO-
RARILY.

EVER
SINCE WE WERE
YOUNG, WHEN-
EVER I GET
ANGRY OVER
SOMETHING
REGARDING
MY SISTER...

IT'S
COOL! I
SHOULD
HAVE
BEEN
MORE
CLEAR.

A
THOUSAND
PARDONS!

MY SISTER
HAS BEEN
IMPOSING
ON YOU,
AND YET
I...



UHH...
I WAS AT
FAULT JUST
NOW, BUT YOU
REALLY OUGHT
TO SEE A
DOCTOR
ABOUT
THAT.

For-
give
me!

Help!

ONE TIME IN
MIDDLE SCHOOL,
I WENT TO COMPLAIN
AT HOME OF A CLASS-
MATE WHO'D BEEN
BULLYING MY SISTER,
BUT WHILE TALKING
AT THE DOOR, I
LOST CONSCIOUS-
NESS...

AFTER THE
FACT, I LEARNED
THAT IT WAS
LAKE NIKAPPU,
NO FEWER THAN
100 KM FROM
THEIR HOME.

...AND WHEN
I CAME TO, SAID
CLASSMATE AND HIS
MOTHER WERE BOUND
TOGETHER IN A BAMBOO
MAT AND DROWNING IN
A WATERING HOLE I
DIDN'T RECOGNIZE.



NAH,
I'M STILL
AT THE RESTAU-
RANT.

HEY.
GOT A
MIN-
UTE?

WHO
ARE YOU
CALLING?

UGH...
I'M
SORRY.

I SWEAR,
TORU!
WE'VE
ALREADY
CAUSED
SO MUCH
TROUBLE
FOR THE
STORE!





AND
I GUESS HE
WANTS TO
SPEAK TO YOU,
SO I'M GONNA
GIVE HIM THE
PHONE.

HM?
YEAH,
YEAH.

SO, TACHI-
BANA-SAN'S
BROTHER'S
HERE NOW.



Ummm.

Ah, ha,
ha, ha!
Selfish-
ness?
Don't be
silly.

I
APOLOGIZE
FOR MY
SISTER'S
SELFISH-
NESS...



Hello.
Pleased to
meet you.
I'm Chuuya's
sister,
Meiko.

...
HELLO?

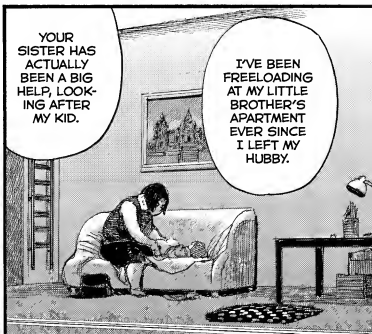


...



I'M SURE
MAKIE-SAN
WILL MAKE
A FINE WIFE
SOMEDAY.

SHE'S
SUCH A
MODEST
GIRL, NOTH-
ING LIKE MY
BONEHEAD
LITTLE
BROTHER.



YOUR
SISTER HAS
ACTUALLY
BEEN A BIG
HELP, LOOK-
ING AFTER
MY KID.

I'VE BEEN
FREELOADING
AT MY LITTLE
BROTHER'S
APARTMENT
EVER SINCE
I LEFT MY
HUBBY.



Really,
you don't
worry
about a thing
over here.
Ha, ha, ha.

Oh,
speaking
of your
sister...

I SEE.
I'M RELIEVED
TO HEAR YOU
SAY THAT...

...BUT I'M
SURE HER
STAYING THERE
MUST BE A
BURDEN IN
SOME WAY, SO
I THINK IT
WOULD BE
BEST IF—

For him
that's a
good thing
to hear
about his
sister.

He must
be happy to
hear that.

IS
THAT
SO?
UMM...

Ud' he!
Stupid he
isn't he?
I'm a go
getter he
isn't he?

I
SHOULD
GIVE THE
PHONE BACK
TO YOUR
BROTHER
NOW...

There are
so many
things I
can do
but I
don't
know
what to
do.

He's been
in a
bad mood
for a while
and I
don't
know
why.

There's
something
about him
that I
don't
understand.

There's
something
about him
that I
don't
understand.

UH-
HUH...

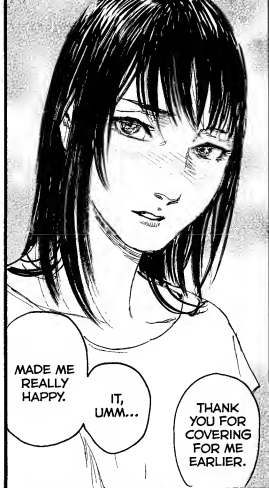


I COULD
SEE HER
BROTHER'S
MIASMA
GRADUALLY
DISSIPATE.

YOU
REALLY
SAVED
OUR
ASSES.

MORAL OF
THE STORY,
DON'T UN-
DERESTIMATE
A BORED
HOUSEWIFE'S
GOSSIP
STOCK.

BUT...
I DO
AGREE
WITH MY
BROTHER.



MADE ME
REALLY
HAPPY.

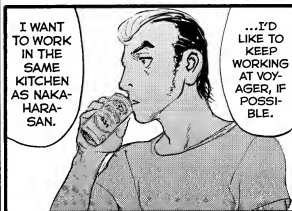
IT,
UMM...

THANK
YOU FOR
COVERING
FOR ME
EARLIER.



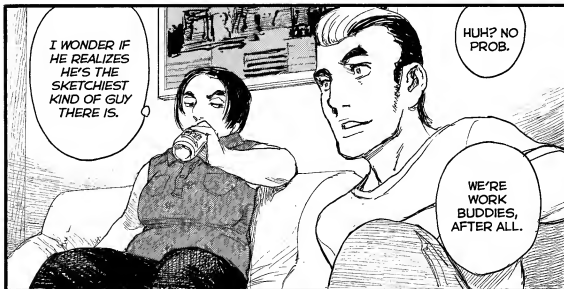
BUT...

I
STRONGLY
FEEL THAT
I NEED
TO LEAVE
HERE AS
SOON AS
I CAN.



I WANT
TO WORK
IN THE
SAME
KITCHEN
AS NAKA-
HARA-
SAN.

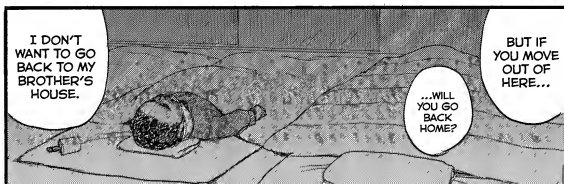
...I'D
LIKE TO
KEEP
WORKING
AT VOY-
AGER, IF
POSSI-
BLE.



I WONDER IF
HE REALIZES
HE'S THE
SKETCHIEST
KIND OF GUY
THERE IS.

HUH? NO
PROB.

WE'RE
WORK
BUDDIES,
AFTER ALL.



I DON'T
WANT TO GO
BACK TO MY
BROTHER'S
HOUSE.

...WILL
YOU GO
BACK
HOME?

BUT IF
YOU MOVE
OUT OF
HERE...



...AND
LIVE A DRAB,
WORRILESS
LIFE AS A
FULL-TIME
HOUSEWIFE.

HE
SERIOUSLY
THINKS
THAT WOULD
MAKE ME
HAPPIEST.



HE'D
RATHER
I STAY
SHEL-
TERED
FROM THE
WORLD...

...FIND
MYSELF
A BANKER
OR CIVIL
SERVANT...

...GO
TO A
MARRIAGE
HUNTING
PARTY...



DO YOU
REMEM-
BER WHEN
MEIKO-SAN
ASKED...

...WHAT
EXACTLY MY
BROTHER
WANTS TO
DO WITH
ME?



IT MADE
ME REALIZE
JUST HOW
HELPLESS OF
A SITUATION
I'D GOTTEN
MYSELF IN.

WHEN I
HEARD THE
WORD "MAR-
RIAGE" COME
OUT OF MY
BROTHER'S
MOUTH,

*I guess
that's just
one modern
indulgence.*

I'M
SURPRISED
HE'S OKAY
WITH YOU
GOING TO
MARRIAGE
HUNTING
PARTIES.

WELL,
YOU'D
DEFINITELY
BE POPULAR
AT THOSE
KINDS OF
SHIN-
DIGS.



...AND
TELL HIM WHAT
I WANTED TO BE
OR WHAT KIND OF
LIFE I WANTED.
I WAS TOO
AFRAID TO.

...NEVER
ONCE DID I
TRY TO ASSERT
MYSELF TO MY
BROTHER...

NOW
THAT I
THINK
ABOUT
IT...



HE'D
JUST SEE
IT AS ME
FIND-
ING AN
EXCUSE
TO RUN
AWAY.

HE
PROBABLY
WOULDN'T
BELIEVE
ME, EVEN
IF I WAS
SERIOUS.

BUT...



WHY
DON'T YOU
TELL HIM YOU
WANT TO BE
THE WIFE OF A
CURRY SHOP
OWNER?

BUT IT
WAS ONLY
REALLY BY
CHANCE THAT
I STARTED
WORKING AT
VOYAGER.

WIFE?



SO, IN
OTHER
WORDS,

I CAN
UNDER-
STAND
WHY HE'D
GET A
LITTLE
OVERPRO-
TECTIVE
IN THAT
SENSE.

YOUR
BROTHER
THINKS
YOU DON'T
HAVE WHAT
IT TAKES
TO DECIDE
YOUR OWN
FUTURE.



I'M SLOWLY
BUILDING UP
TO MAKING IT
HAPPEN.

AND
REALLY...

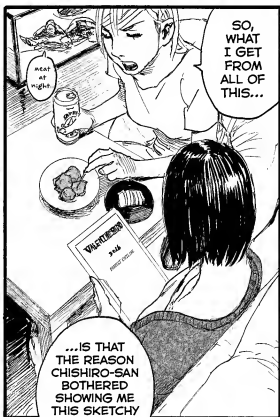
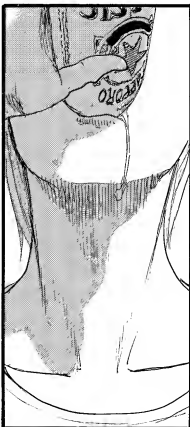
...THERE'S
ACTUALLY
SOMETHING
ELSE I WANT
TO TRY DOING
RIGHT NOW.



IT
FEELS
LIKE FATE
IN A WAY.

IF I HADN'T
STARTED
WORKING AT
VOYAGER.

...IT'S
SOMETHING
I MIGHT
NEVER HAVE
THOUGHT TO
TRY...





AND WITH
YOU, MINARE
KODA, AS MY
MAIN DJ,

AND
KATSUMI KUREKO
ONBOARD AS A
SCRIPTWRITER, IN
THE STRONGEST
LINEUP I CAN
IMAGINE...

I'M GOING
TO DO EVERY-
THING I CAN TO
BECOME A CHIEF
DIRECTOR WITHIN
THE NEXT TWO
YEARS.



...IT'LL
BECOME A
SHOW OF
LEGENDS/
THAT'S THE
ONLY FUTURE
I ENVISION!

...I'LL
CONVINCE
THE PRODUCER
TO LET ME MAN-
AGE AN ENTIRE
THREE-HOUR
BLOCK!

BETWEEN
THE THREE
OF US...



ANY
WRITER
BUT HIM!
SERIOUSLY!

NO,
THANKS!

WHAAT?!



GRAB IT!

MIZU-
HO!

MINARE-
SAN!

